

CATHERINE'S LITERARY WORK

painter, in his capacity of Captain of the People, and to Lorenzo del Pino, the learned decretalist of Bologna ;¹ and, above all, the letters to her Florentine friends and associates, the Soderini and the Canigiani, who had suffered so heavily in what she deemed the cause of righteousness. " It seems to me," she wrote to Niccolo Soderini, when a new sentence of banishment fell upon him, "that the divine sweet goodness of God has now anew shown you a most special love, in having made you follow the teaching and the lives of the saints ; He has made you worthy to endure for the glory and praise of His name, in order to render you the fruit in life eternal, instead of in this life."² Two of Catherine's letters to Piero Canigiani have been preserved, one of them hitherto unpublished. The first, written ^{cc} with desire of seeing you founded in true and most perfect love, in order that you may be robed in the bridal garment of perfect charity," contrasts the love of self with the divine love : " that true and most perfect love, which is so full of delight and sweetness that no misfortune can take that sweetness from it nor disturb it; but misfortune only the more strengthens the mind, because it brings the soul nearer to her Creator."⁸ The second extols the ^a glorious virtue of perseverance," and urges the Guelf politician to beware of getting involved in the toils of faction, but, like a true pilgrim, turn from the affairs of the world to seek his true home.* Those to Messer Ristoro, five in number, must be read in their entirety. As Augusta Drane truly observes, they " form a series by themselves, and contain a body of instructions for the sanctification of persons living in the world, which for their prudence and practical wisdom have never been surpassed."

There are other letters, again, as we have seen, especially those to the Popes and great prelates, which confront the most

¹ Letters 358 (212), 363 (213), 193 (224).

² Letter 297 (218). Cf. Letter 314 (343), to Costanza Soderini. Niccoli was put under bounds at Treviso, on August 27, 1378. Cf. *Anonimo Florentine*, p. 376.

⁸ Letter 96 (233).

* Appendix, Letter

VII.